

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2636

EYES ONLY GARRISON FROM MATLOCK

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: OGEN

SUBJ: OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

1. WISH TO ALERT YOU TO OUR SERIOUS RESERVATIONS (SHARED BY AMBASSADOR) WITH POSITION WHICH SEEMS TO BE DEVELOPING IN DEPARTMENT REGARDING CONSTRUCTION OF NEW EMBASSIES WHICH WOULD REQUIRE EACH STAGE OF PROCESS TO MOVE SIMULTANEOUSLY. UNLESS MORE CAN BE DONE TO SPEED UP PROCESS ON OUR SIDE, WE BELIEVE THAT THIS FORMULA WILL SIMPLY PRODUCE A CHRONIC IRRITATION IN OUR RELATIONSHIP. IF OUR PROBLEM WERE SOVIET DELAYS, INSISTING ON SIMULTANEOUS COMPLETION OF THE VARIOUS STAGES WOULD HAVE MERIT, BUT SO FAR THIS HAS NOT BEEN THE CASE. IF WE INSIST ON HOLDING UP START OF SOVIET PROJECT UNTIL WE ARE READY AND THEIR COSTS GO UP AS RESULT OF INFLATION, WE CAN BE SURE THAT THEY WILL ATTEMPT BY ANY MEANS AT HAND TO RECOUP THEIR LOSSES, AND THIS COULD RESULT IN ENDLESS HAGGLING AND DELAYS LATER.

2. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, A STRICT APPLICATION OF STEP-BY-STEP SIMULTANEITY, UNDER GENERAL CONDITIONS OF US TARDINESS, WILL INEVITABLY CREATE POLITICAL PROBLEMS. THE SOVIET WOULD DOUBTLESS ARGUE THAT ARTICLE 6 OF CONDITIONS OF CONSTRUCTION AGREEMENT REFERS TO SIMULTANEITY ONLY IN REGARD TO THE OCCUPATION OF CHANCERIES. LAST SENTENCE WHICH STATES "ALL OTHER BUILDINGS MAY BE OCCUPIED AT ANY TIME AFTER COMPLETION AND ACCEPTANCE AND PUT TO THEIR DESIGNATED USE" CLEARLY
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IMPLIES THAT SEQUENCE AND STAGES MAY VARY. FURTHERMORE,

THE CONDITION STATED EARLIER REGARDING MUTUAL AGREEMENT ON SEQUENCE OF CONSTRUCTION DOES NOT NECESSARILY IMPLY AGREEMENT ON THE TIMING OF THE SEQUENCES, SINCE IT RELATES SPECIFICALLY TO DIVISION INTO SEQUENCES. WHATEVER LEGAL ARGUMENTS WE MAY DEVISE TO JUSTIFY THE POSITION, IT IS CLEAR THAT SIMULTANEOUS EXECUTION OF EACH STAGE IN THE CONSTRUCTION IS NOT RPT NOT STATED IN THE AGREEMENT AND THE SOVIETS ARE CERTAIN TO CONSIDER UNACCEPTABLE ACTIONS ON OUR PART WHICH WOULD PENALIZE THEM FOR OUR OWN SLOW PACE. THE PROVISION FOR SIMULTANEOUS OCCUPANCY OF CHANCERIES SHOULD PROVIDE US WITH SUFFICIENT LEVERAGE TO KEEP THE PRESSURE ON THE SOVIETS HERE IF THEIR PROJECT AS A WHOLE GETS OUT AHEAD OF OURS.

3. THESE CONSIDERATIONS WOULD BE LARGELY ACADEMIC IF WE COULD BE CONFIDENT THAT OUR OWN PROJECT WILL MOVE ALONG WITH DISPATCH. UNFORTUNATELY, WE DO NOT FEEL CONFIDENT ON THIS POINT, AND THE RECENT VISIT BY THE ARCHITECTS DID NOTHING TO DISPEL OUR IMPRESSION THAT, FOR BOTH FBO AND SKIDMORE, OWINGS, THE NEW EMBASSY IS BASICALLY A BUSINESS-AS-USUAL DEAL. WHILE NOT WISHING IN ANY WAY TO CUT ANY CORNERS ON QUALITY, ESTHETICS, TECHNICAL PREPARATION OR LEGAL REQUIREMENTS, IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO UNDERSTAND WHY IT MUST TAKE ANOTHER YEAR TO OBTAIN MORE DETALIED DESIGN PLANS. NOR IS IT READILY APPARENT TO US LAYMEN WHY IT SHOULD HAVE TAKEN 26 MONTHS BETWEEN THE SIGNING OF THE C OF C AGREEMENT TO PRODUCE MERELY A PRELIMINARY DESIGN. IN SUM, WE FEEL THAT THE PROJECT COULD BE HANDLED MUCH MORE EXPEDITIOUSLY THAN SEEMS IN PROSPECT, AND, ASIDE FROM THE DISADVANTAGES TO STEP-BY-STEP SIMULTANEITY CITED ABOVE, ARE CONCERNED TO SEE US ADOPT A POLICY WHICH WOULD REDUCE PRESSURE ON OUR SIDE TO PRECEED PROMPTLY. STOESEL

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